

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-02

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DRAFTED BY NEA/INS:JELEADER:HME

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 032883

FOLLOWING COLOMBO 446 ACTION SECSTATE INFO NEW DELHI FEB 14TH.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 446

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MOPS, PFOR, CE

SUBJ: VISIT BY USS BAINBRIDGE TO COLOMBO

REF: STATE 28432

1. EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WOULD NOT BE IN OUR INTEREST TO REQUEST PORT VISIT OF USS BAINBRIDGE. PRIME MINISTER HAS JUST SENT PRIVATE LETTER OF PROTEST OVER DIEGO GARCIA EXPANSION TO THE PRESIDENT AND DIEGO IS AN EMOTIONAL ISSUE IN SRI LANKA AND REGION AS WHOLE AT THIS TIME. TO ASK FOR SHIP VISIT IN PRESENT ATMOSPHERE WOULD PUT GSL IN DIFFICULT POSITION AND WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY RESULT IN ITS TURNING REQUEST DOWN. IT WOULD ALSO UNDOUBTEDLY MAKE GSL CONSIDER UNITED STATES WAS IGNORING CEYLONESE POLITICAL-DIPLOMATIC PROBLEMS AT TIME WHEN GSL HAS CLEARLY TAKEN US INTERESTS INTO ACCOUNT IN ITS OWN HANDLING OF DIEGO GARCIA QUESTION.

2. WHILE REQUEST FOR ANY SHIP VISIT IN CURRENT SITUATION  
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WOULD BE DELICATE, BAINBRIDGE ALSO PRESENTS ADDITIONAL

PROBLEM OF NUCLEAR PROPULSION. NO NUCLEAR-POWERED SHIP HAS EVER CALLED AT COLOMBO. WE OF COURSE RECOGNIZE DISTINCTION BETWEEN NUCLEAR PROPULSION AND NUCLEAR WEAPONRY, BUT WE ARE NOT SURE CEYLONSE WOULD DO LIKEWISE IN PRESENT ENVIRONMENT. OUTCOME COULD BE REVIVAL OF NON-NUCLEAR DECLARATION (NND), PERHAPS IN NEW VARIANT, WHICH WOULD IN ANY FORM BE UNFAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT FROM USG STANDPOINT. EVEN WITHOUT REVIVAL OF NND, GSL TURN-DOWN OF BAINBRIDGE MIGHT SET UNFORTUNATE PRECEDENT IF, AS IS LIKELY, WE SHOULD AT SOME FUTURE TIME WISH TO BRING NUCLEAR-POWERED VESSEL INTO COLOMBO. (WE WISH NOTE THAT RATNAVALE'S COMMENTS IN 1971 AND 1972 RE GSL POSITION ON NUCLEAR-POWERED SHIP VISITS ARE NOT RELEVANT TO SITUATION IN 1974.)

3. BESIDES FOREGOING MAJOR REASONS FOR OPPOSING BAINBRIDGE VISIT NOW, WE MUST POINT TO FACT OF SHORT LEAD TIME, WHICH WOULD TAKE BAINBRIDGE OUT OF NORMAL RUN OF SHIP VISIT REQUESTS AND THUS GIVE IT UNDESIRABLE HIGH VISIBILITY.

4. OUR FUNDAMENTAL APPROACH TO ISSUE OF SHIPS VISITS IS TO PRESERVE COLOMBO AS REGULAR PORT OF CALL FOR UNITED STATES NAVY. THIS OBJECTIVE TAKES ON HIGHER PRIORITY WITH US DECISION TO EXPAND AMERICAN NAVAL PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN. WE THEREFORE CONSIDER IT WISER IN OUR LONGER-TERM INTERESTS TO FOREGO PARTICULAR VISIT AT MOMENT SO THAT WHEN DUST SETTLES OVER DIEGO, COLOMBO WILL STILL BE ACCESSIBLE TO US.

5. EMBASSY CONSEQUENTLY RECOMMENDS AGAINST DEPTS CONCURRENCE IN FEB 23-27 BAINBRIDGE VISIT TO COLOMBO.

VAN HOLLEN  
UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** NUCLEAR POWERED SHIPS, MILITARY VISITS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 19 FEB 1974  
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